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### Deposited in DRO:

25 February 2014

### Version of attached file:

Accepted Version

### Peer-review status of attached file:

Peer-reviewed

### Citation for published item:

Mills, Simon R.S. (2011) 'The tale of the three young brothers : an analytical study of music and communal joy (hng) in Korean folk culture.', *Music analysis.*, 29 (1-3). pp. 276-305.

### Further information on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2249.2011.00332.x>

### Publisher's copyright statement:

The definitive version is available at [www.wileyonlinelibrary.com](http://www.wileyonlinelibrary.com)

### Additional information:

Special issue on music and emotion.

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## **The Tale of the Three Young Brothers: An Analytical Study of Music and Communal Joy (*Hŭng*) in Korean Folk Culture**

### **Introduction: ‘*Han*’ and ‘*Hŭng*’**

When discussing the essential characteristics of traditional Korean folk music, Korean musicians and scholars often refer to the emotional states of ‘*han*’ and ‘*hŭng*’ – particular forms of suffering and joy, respectively (see, for example, Chŏng Pyŏngho 1985, p. 178; Han Myŏnghŭi 1983, pp. 17–34). From their perspective, folk music performance tends to serve either as a vehicle for the cathartic outpouring of pain or as an expression of feelings of joy, the performance itself encouraging the blossoming of positive emotions.

Spanning many fields of writing, there is a large body of literature exploring the state of *han* in particular, aiming to describe what sorts of emotions are involved, how these are expressed, and to isolate the causes.<sup>1</sup> Lee Sangbok’s definition of *han* appears to be quite typical: “[*Han* is]... cognitive and emotional pain or oppression which has been accumulated and deeply rooted in the heart of the oppressed” (1995, p. 105).<sup>2</sup> Through the varied writings, and also depictions in popular media (for example, Im Kwont’aek’s famous 1993 film *Sŏp’yŏnje*), *han* has become intimately tied to episodes in Korean history and features of Korean culture – especially, the Japanese occupation, the Korean War, and the often restrictive roles and obligations placed on the individual within Confucian culture. It has become an icon of Korean identity.<sup>3</sup> Many Koreans stress that they are unified and set apart in their common experience of this concoction of emotions, and I have sometimes been told that I cannot understand what *han* feels like because I am not Korean.

Like *han*, *hŭng* is associated with the experiences of the Korean people in history – in particular, the intensely communal lifestyle that characterised pre-Industrial village life and which remains deeply imbedded in the social behaviour of many Koreans today (Eikemeier 1991; Yi Ihwa 2001, pp. 265–279). Rather than denote a quiet personal inward-looking experience of joy, the term specifically denotes the kind of emotions that derive from celebratory communal events; these are the feelings that well up when people come together to have fun – often as a response to *han*-inducing adversities (Yi Sŏngch’ŏn 1997, pp. 227–271).

Although, there are now quite a few works of music analysis that relate musical patterns, techniques, and timbres to *han*, especially in respect to the raw outpourings of the folk art genre *p’ansori* (for example, Ch’ŏn Idu 1986; Willoughby 2000; Pihl 1994, p. 6), there are very few works of scholarship that have attempted to elucidate the links between musical patterns and the generation of communal joy.<sup>4</sup> This article seeks to address this lack. It will explore what the state of *hŭng* involves in more depth, introduce the traditional performance contexts that are particularly associated with

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<sup>1</sup> Kim Sang-il and Ro Young-chan 1984; Kim Myŏnggon 1994. For more examples refer to: Howard 2006, pp. 78–79; Willoughby 2000, pp. 17–19.

<sup>2</sup> See also Chu Sŭngt’aek 1991, pp. 852–857; Si-Sa-Yong-O-Sa Dictionary 1979, p. 2332 (in English). I have sometimes heard people use the analogy of fermentation (*sakhida*) to describe the way that *han* develops and the ‘flavour’ of the resulting emotions (also used by Ch’ŏn Idu 1986, p. 139).

<sup>3</sup> Howard (2006: 80) and Willoughby (2000) provide further discussion about *han*’s importance in the definition of Korean identity.

<sup>4</sup> One notable contribution is Kim Inu’s 1987 article, which is returned to later in this piece of work.

it, and then examine how musicians contribute towards its growth, via detailed analysis of a single case-study musical performance. Specifically, analysis will focus on an episode from the origin myth of the triple-deity Samshin (lit. “Three gods”) – an important god within the pantheon of Korean traditional folk religion – as sung by a Korean shaman (*mudang*) to the accompaniment of a double-headed hourglass drum (*changgo*) and large gong (*ching*). The performance, which lasts just over 11 minutes, was recorded by the author at a shaman ritual held in an East Coast village named Mop’o, in North Kyöngsang Province, on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2000. It constitutes one of many memorable episodes in Korean folk ritual, where performance instigates a striking transformation amongst the gathered throng; at the start, the villagers were seated in silence but, by the end, they were dancing, laughing, shouting out, clapping along – experiencing the revelry of *hŭng*.

### Korean Conceptions of *Hŭng*

For translations of ‘*hŭng*’ into English, Korean-English dictionaries tend to propose words such as ‘fun’, ‘amusement’, ‘enthusiasm’, ‘merriment’, ‘mirth’, and ‘pleasure’ (Si-Sa-Yong-O-Sa 1979, p. 2462). Unfortunately, none of these words come close to encapsulating the word’s full meaning. As is often the case, one can deduce much more from ‘unpacking’ the Chinese character for the word, which is written in Korea as follows:

興 (同 + 與)

This character is actually a composite of two other characters (in brackets above): ‘*tong*’, meaning ‘same’, plus the main body of ‘*yŏ*’, meaning ‘rising’ (Chinhyönsögwon 1981, p. 1235). The latter is commonly interpreted as a pictogram depicting two hands in a holding position (above the long horizontal line) and two outstretched hands (beneath). So, the full character for *hŭng* clearly shows two people, facing each other, joined together in a spirit of sameness – i.e. as one – and lifting up something. Usage reveals that it is the people’s own spirits that are metaphorically being ‘lifted’ here as a bi-product of their coming together in a joint activity. The active nature of the phenomenon is readily apparent; people are achieving their elevation through their own efforts.<sup>5</sup>

Another way to refer to the *hŭng* phenomenon, using pure Korean language as opposed to Sino-Korean, is to say ‘*shin nanda*’. Here, the word ‘*shin*’ relates to the almost palpable special energy (*shin baram* or *ki*, Chinese *qi*) that one feels as a participant (Yi Söngch’ön 1997, pp. 237, 273; Si-Sa-Yong-O-Sa 1979, p. 1375). The processes involved and the resulting experiences can easily be related to Durkheim’s ‘social effervescence’ (2001, pp. 157, 162–169) or Turner’s ‘communitas’ (1969, p. 96;

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<sup>5</sup> Chinese-English dictionary definitions suggest that the Chinese character for ‘*hŭng*’ denotes similar processes of ‘elevation’, ‘generation’, and ‘encouragement’ within contemporary China, likewise engendering ‘excitement’ and ‘happiness’ (see, for example, Chik and Ng 2000, p. 381). Similarly, ‘*han*’ appears to be defined in China in ways that closely resemble those encountered within Korea (*ibid* p. 146). A more detailed comparison lies outside the scope of this article.

1982, p. 44).<sup>6</sup> Yet another way to describe the phenomenon is '*shinmyŏng nada*', although this is a rather seldom-used, old-fashioned expression that is mainly used in writing referring to the *hŭng* experiences of religious ritual – perhaps, being more akin to 'ecstasy'<sup>7</sup> (Yi Sŏngch'ŏn 1997, p. 218; Kim Yŏlgyu 1991, pp. 764–768; Howard 2006, p. 78).

One aspect of *hŭng* that is not clearly represented in the character above is that of fun. As mentioned earlier, the term does not relate to the types of transcendent experiences achieved through strict discipline, for example meditation (*myŏngsang*); rather, it derives from collective involvement in the subversive, escapist, world-creating processes of playful creativity (Rhie Sangil 1975, pp. 24–28; Kister 1997: x; see also Schechner 2006, pp. 89–121). Accordingly, musical forms that are intimately associated with the state of *hŭng* are sometimes referred to using the word '*nori*' (play) – for example, '*kut nori*' ('shaman ritual play') and '*p'ungmul nori*' ('percussion band play'). In the psychotherapeutic context of shamanic ritual, participation in *hŭng*-promoting activities is explicitly related to the objectives of *p'uri* ('loosening' or catharsis), although this important function is evident in many other playful performative contexts too (see Mills 2007, pp. 6, 26; Kister 1997, pp. 110–112; Kendall 1977)<sup>8</sup>.

Of course, participation in joyful communal events is in no way peculiar to Korean culture. However, there has long been a pronounced emphasis on 'doing things together as one', which still frequently surprises foreign visitors to South Korea. In part, this appears to be a legacy from pre-industrial agricultural life. Until relatively recently, Korea was predominantly made up of people living precarious lives in subsistence-level communities; modernization and urbanization occurred extraordinarily rapidly, only after the Korean war (1950–1953). Desires for private ownership were subjugated largely out of necessity, to ensure the wellbeing of the community. Farmers worked together in agricultural collectives known as '*tŭe*', in which all the fit and healthy males would team up to undertake tasks, most commonly the planting, tending, and harvesting of rice, and people would group together to form co-operative social organizations (*kŭe*), pooling their money to pay for new equipment, weddings, funerals, and other important events (Yi Ihwa 2001, pp. 265–279; Howard 1989, pp. 28, 32; Eikermeier 1991, p. 106). Subsequent dictatorships during the 60s, 70s and 80s seem to have encouraged the perpetuation of this communal mentality through education and propaganda; working as one, the Korean people could be controlled towards reaching ambitious growth targets, in competition with North Korea and Japan (Wang 1991, pp. 619–621). From the late 1970s, the left-wing pro-democracy People's Culture Movement (*minjung munhwa undong*) encouraged the Korean people to unite once more, drawing on their communal cultural past in a fight against oppression (see Wells 1995). Within many contexts, both historical and contemporary,

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<sup>6</sup> Tim Olaveson (2001) highlights the commonalities linking Durkheim and Turner's interpretations of performance-related processes and experiences.

<sup>7</sup> Mircea Eliade (1951/1964) famously used the term 'ecstasy' (from the Greek, *ekstasis*, 'to leave') to denote the shamanic spirit journey. However, that is not the interpretation being referred to in this particular context; rather, *shinmyŏng* is being likened to the 'ecstasy' of common parlance: transcendent experience in which the individual is drawn "out of the world of daily routine into a...realm of Dionysian celebration" (Kister 1997: 23).

<sup>8</sup> As Kister points out, the widely performed *kop'uri* (lit. 'knot release') constitutes an excellent example of playful psychodrama in Korean shaman ritual; here, the *mudang* ties knots in a long white cloth while detailing problems and then joyfully unties them while detailing solutions, and often dancing (Kister 1997, pp. 110–112). Kendall (1977) effectively captures the playful, party-like nature of shaman ritual in her ethnography.

Korean discourses of togetherness can be identified as expressions of nationalist sentiment or other separatist ideology, involving as they do a stark delineation between in-group and outsiders.

Still today, much time and energy is devoted to fostering close bonds of commonality amongst relatives, ex-school and university classmates, co-workers, and within varied clubs and societies (*kye*) (Eikemeier 1991; Kim P'ildong 1995, p. 270). Many Koreans consider this penchant for generating togetherness through *hŭng*-promoting activities to be deeply rooted in the Korean psyche, with origins far back in history. Reflecting this common conception, the influential scholar of aesthetics, Han Myŏnghŭi, considers a predilection for activities that generate *shinmyŏng* (ecstasy) to be one of the defining characteristics of Korean culture (Han 1998, p. 418), and it is common for Korean music scholars to suggest a continuity linking today's communal folk performances with those of the Three Tribal States period (c. 400BC–0CE), on the basis of just a few short descriptions such as those presented in the Sanguo Zhi (Records of the Three Kingdoms, 3<sup>rd</sup> Century, by Chenshou). For example, referring to the latter source, Song Hyejin writes: "... it is very well possible both Nongsa [Farming] plays and songs, still playing today, are living fossils from the New Stone-age Samhan Nations" (2000, p. 40).

### ***Hŭng* in Traditional Korean Folk Culture**

In the pre-industrial communities of Korea, as elsewhere, singing songs together would inevitably have constituted a vital source of entertainment and an aid to social bonding. The enormous body of folk songs (*minyo*) collected over many fieldwork trips in the 1980s and 90s, and brought together in the Great Series of Korean Folksongs (Han'guk Minyo Taejŏn) is testament to this (Kang Sŏnggu 1995). Many of the songs in the collection incorporate humour (often of a bawdy nature), exhortations to celebrate together in spite of troubles (which may be detailed in the text), a high level of repetition both in text and melody (enabling broad participation and synchronisation with repetitive work or dance), and pronounced interactivity between participants (often featuring alternation between parts, rather than unison or solo singing throughout). These features, which are probably evidenced in a great many folksong traditions around the globe, are ideally suited to the creation of *hŭng*. They are clearly discernible in the following folk song texts – collected in the same region as the case-study shaman performance (North Kyŏngsang Province).<sup>9</sup> The first extract is from one of the most widely performed songs in the region, "*Ch'ingch'ingi sori*" (*Ch'ingch'ingi* Song), in which the same meaningless syllables are sung between every line (Kim Pongu 1994, p. 166):

Solo: Chiina ch'ing ch'ing nane,

Group: Chiina ch'ing ch'ing nane [Repeated between every line...]

Solo: *In the sky there are lots of stars,*

*On the river bank there are lots of stones,*

*In the old clothes there are lots of lice,*

*Other people's daughters-in-law make lots of talk,*

*In my heart there are lots of problems.*

*Its good, its good – just a little, but its good.*

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<sup>9</sup> These extracts are translated by the author.

The second extract, below, is from a rice-harvesting song (Kang Sönggu 1995, pp. 676–677):<sup>10</sup>

First: *Beneath that short ramie fabric top, look at those milky breasts – like lotus flowers!*

Second: *If you stare a lot then you'll get ill, so look at them just a pinch.*

First: *He's left his rice-patch in a terrible state! Where has he gone?*

Second: *Carrying an octopus and a huge abalone, he's gone to the drink house to play with his concubine.*

Although very few Koreans still perform folk songs in the traditional contexts, taking it in turns to sing and dance in front of others remains a popular pastime, now within the context of drink-fueled *noraebang* (karaoke) and private get-togethers of friends, often with the aid of a stereo.

Another traditional musical form that is closely associated with *hŭng* is *p'ungmul* (percussion band music), sometimes also referred to as '*nongak*' (lit. farmers' music). Nowadays, most scholars think that *p'ungmul*'s origins are intimately intertwined with the workings of the aforementioned *ture* farming collective and the type of communal lifestyle that it engendered (Hesselink 2006, pp. 16, 21; Yi Ihwa 2001, p. 271; Howard 1989, pp. 28, 32).<sup>11</sup> While their comrades were performing agricultural tasks, some of the *ture* members would be allotted the job of accompanying them with music played on the *changgo* (double-headed hourglass drum), *puk* (barrel drum), *ching* (large gong) and *kkwaenggwari* (small hand gong). The repetitive pulse would help the labourers regularise their actions, not only contributing to efficiency, but also lifting morale (Hesselink 2006, pp. 16, 21; Howard 2006, p. 11). Traditionally, *p'ungmul* bands also performed rituals addressing the needs of the community as a whole – exorcising potentially malevolent spirits from courtyards, gateways, pathways, and homes, and appealing to the generosity of gods such as Sönghwang, the village guardian deity (Hesselink 2006, pp. 11–34; Howard 1989, pp. 29–37). In addition, the bands provided secular entertainment for their communities, performing in a common space (Howard 1989, p. 30). Holding their instruments, they would dance in formation as they played, enact short skits, perform acrobatics, and occasionally shout out joyous celebratory texts such as the following (originally collected from the Southwest region of the country and now preserved in the SamulNori<sup>12</sup> piece "*Yöngnam Nongak*"):

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<sup>10</sup> For many of the melodies that appear in the MBC collection, there is a wide variety of lyrics that can be applied; in performance, the singers taking it in turn to contribute favourites, fitting them within the well-known frameworks. The lines translated here were evidently quite popular, since they appear in various guises in a number of recordings; elsewhere, the breasts are compared to melons or peaches and the first person is advised to look "just a grain" or "just a fingernail", and the deserter is described as carrying different seafood delicacies to eat with his concubine. Likewise, for "*Ch'ingch'ingi sori*", a wide variety of lines are possible: "...lots of sand", "...lots of rice", and so on.

<sup>11</sup> Howard (1989, pp. 28–37) also suggests a number of competing origin theories, which largely derive from *p'ungmul*'s occasional associations with Buddhist temples, shaman rituals, and the military – associations that are greatly diminished in the present day.

<sup>12</sup> SamulNori is a re-interpretation of *p'ungmul*, based on the same rhythms and played on the same instruments, but with the sequence of patterns fixed into pieces, which are of suitable length and virtuosic complexity for concert performance.

*Look at the sky, grab the stars;  
Look at the ground, work the soil.  
This year was a year of abundance;  
Next year too will be an abundant year.  
Moon, moon, bright moon;  
Light as day, bright moon.  
In the darkness, there is light,  
Shining on us!*

The village groups are recorded as having been remarkably inclusive and egalitarian; in performance, the establishment of a strong composite texture was favoured over the display of individual technical skill (Provine 1975; Howard 1989, pp. 75, 82). In the late 1970s and 80s, the disappearing *p'ungmul* traditions of rural Korea were adopted in urban centres as a musical banner for the aforementioned people's culture movement, encouraged by influential texts such as Kim Inu's '*P'ungmul* Ritual and Communal Ecstasy' (1987). Currently, there are a great many institutions spread across the whole country that enable enthusiasts from many walks of life to participate in groups. Particularly prevalent are the music circles that operate in schools and universities, and private performing arts centres, where experts provide classes and workshops for the general public.

The final type of traditional folk performance that is closely associated with *hŭng* – and, in this case, also *han* – is shaman ritual (*kut*). Although varying considerably in scale, style, and procedure, shaman rituals consistently act as therapeutic forums for problem solving. The officiating shaman (*mudang*), who is usually a woman, leads those present through a variety of ritual episodes, often with help from musical accompanists and neophytes. She gives people varied opportunities to voice their problems and release their pain (*han p'uri*)<sup>13</sup>, diagnoses the sources of these problems through various divinatory procedures (sometimes also including spirit-possession), offers relief through advice and entertainment, and leads people in placatory prayer and ritual actions to appease the relevant gods of the Korean folk pantheon (which includes the Buddha) (see Mills 2007, pp. 3–6). Although there are episodes in which the attendees adopt a more passive approach to proceedings – listening and observing in relative stillness – for much of the time, they pool their energies in vigorous active participation. They chat, laugh, sing or clap along, dance, and sometimes even perform songs themselves karaoke style, to a beat provided on a drum and/or gong. And although people may openly grieve at times during proceedings, an extraordinarily vibrant party-like atmosphere often prevails. In spite of Christian and government opposition against those aspects deemed 'superstitious' and 'backward' (Hahm 1988; Howard 1998, p. 4), there is much evidence to suggest that many Koreans still participate in these rituals.

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<sup>13</sup> '*Salp'uri*' and '*ekp'uri*' are two other terms that are widely-used to denote the curative processes of ritual – specifically, the removal of bad spirits or bad fortune that has collected within or around someone. '*Salp'uri*' also denotes a type of dance that expresses these processes and a particular rhythmic pattern that accompanies the dance.

## Case Study: Music and *Hŭng* in an Episode from the Samshin Origin Myth

The techniques used by performers to generate *hŭng* and guide its subsequent growth vary from genre to genre. However, rather than attempt a broad survey, analysis will focus on a single performance of an episode from East Coast shaman ritual – the aforementioned excerpt from the origin myth of the triple-deity Samshin (lit. ‘Three gods’), as performed in Mop’o village on 8<sup>th</sup> April 2000. Through detailed step-by-step commentary-style analysis, the aim is to demonstrate how performers and ritual attendees manage to create an atmosphere that, at the emotional peak of performance, appears to be alive with effervescent communal joy.

As always, it is the officiating shaman (*mudang*) and her accompanists who are primarily responsible for controlling the transformation. This performance features the typical forces used for the delivery of mythic narrative song in the East Coast ritual style (see Mills 2007, pp. 33–41):

- An officiating female shaman (*mudang*), who stands in front of the colourful altar facing the attenders, singing the narrative text and dancing. In this case, the shaman is Kim Tongŏn.
- A male accompanist, who sits on the ground facing the officiating shaman, playing the double-headed hourglass drum (*changgo*), singing a repeated refrain, and occasionally providing additional vocal encouragements (*ch’uimsae*). Kim Yongt’aek, the current Important Intangible Cultural Property holder for the style, performs these roles.
- A secondary accompanist, who sits beside the drummer, demarcating principal metric beats on a large gong (*ching*) suspended from a stand. In this context, the player dampens every stroke shortly after it is sounded with his other hand, which is placed in the back of the instrument. The younger generation male ritualist, Kim Chinhwan, performs this role.

Like most ritual origin myths, the story of Samshin’s genesis is quite lengthy, lasting anything from an hour to three hours, depending on the singing *mudang*’s decisions regarding which episodes to include and which to reduce or even omit.<sup>14</sup> The sung narrative is divided into sections often referred to as chapters (*chang*), which are performed as relatively discreet entities, separated by short breaks. The Samshin story<sup>15</sup> begins with a rich young woman called Tanggŭm who is left alone at home one day by her parents. At this point, a folk manifestation of the Buddha (referred to as “Sejon”) pays a visit in the form of a monk collecting alms. The monk then seduces her, she becomes pregnant, and her parents expel her from the family home. Forced to live a frugal life far away, she gives birth to triplets – three boys – who she raises as a single mother. The chosen episode, which concerns the experiences of the three young brothers, begins at this point, the *mudang* singing the

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<sup>14</sup> Walraven demonstrates how the more senior skilled *mudang* often improvise with text, elaborating upon and editing material, and occasionally introducing material from other sources, for example, texts more commonly associated with other ritual sections (Walraven 1994, pp. 123–141).

<sup>15</sup> This story has been summarized by many scholars, including Im Sŏkjae (1974, pp. 33–39) and Boudewijn Walraven (1994, pp. 94–95), in English, and Ch’oe Chŏngyŏ (1979, pp. 31–32), Ch’oe Kilsŏng (1980, pp. 196–197; 1981, pp. 184–192), Ch’oe Nan’gyŏng (1992, pp. 9–11), and Lee Taedong (1978, pp. 52–57), in Korean.



following text to the accompaniment of hourglass drum (*changgo*), gong, and sung refrain, “Ah, Sejon-a!” (“Ah, Buddha!”) (0:00–2:25):<sup>16</sup>

Ex.1 The beginning of the performance: “*The three young brothers: What geniuses they are!*”

Shaman song  
Ya-dül sam-hyöng - je - nün: Chae-ju-ga öl - ma-na jo-hün - ji!

Refrain (sung by drummer)  
Se - jon - a!

Changgo  
(higher pitched head)  
(lower pitched head)

light, with tip of stick

produced by lightly striking head and then forcing stick into skin

large gong stroke (damped)

*The three young brothers:*

*What geniuses they are!*

*Chinese characters: they learn them all:*

“Chöñ” means “hanül” (sky), “hyöñ” means “kömal” (black), “hwang” – “nuru” (yellow), “ju” – “chip” (house)...

*Because of them, the others at the school suffer.*

*That’s the three young brothers.*

*The others at the school want to kill them:*

*How much you can’t imagine!*

*They plan to lure them out*

*On a boating trip.*

*They take them there and push them into the water,*

*But the merciful Buddha saves them.*

*That’s the three young brothers.*

*The others try to kill them by pushing them off a cliff.*

*They lure them to the mountains and remote fields to look at flowers...*

[Various other attempts to kill them are detailed]

*And they say: “Now they must be dead”.*

*But look now: there are the three brothers,*

*Sitting there playing!*

*How can they still be alive?*

*“Why did you try to kill us?”*

*“Because you are fatherless.*

*What’s the point of you studying in our school?”*

<sup>16</sup> The song text presented here has been translated by the author. In the interests of concision, certain passages have been edited out – specifically, those that repetitively rework a theme rather than introduce new narrative material and direction. Places where material has been omitted are marked with “...”. The author would like to thank Sunghee Park for her invaluable help with the translation of the more complex passages.

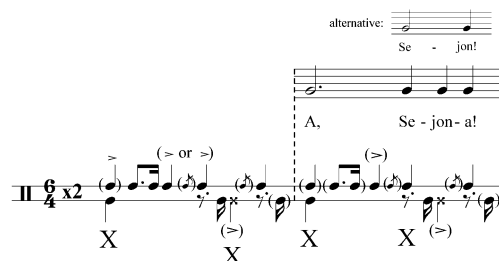
*As total rejects,  
The brothers return home.*

In most Korean genres, musical material is organized within the frameworks of rhythmic cycles (*changdan*, lit. 'long-short')<sup>17</sup> and, in East coast ritual, an unusually large repertoire of cycles are employed, each of which is associated with a particular ritual context and type of lyric content. Texts detailing states of unhappiness and intended to elicit a sympathetic outpouring of grief (*han*) are either sung in conjunction with cycles that are lengthy, slow-tempo, and metrically complex or are delivered without any fixed metric framework at all, often using a half-weeping half-singing style of vocalization called 'weeping song' (*urŭm sori*) and featuring only sparse percussion accompaniment to punctuate the ends of phrases. When a god is addressed for the first time in proceedings, here too, the gravity of the situation is reflected in the use of long complex cycles. Conversely, as one might expect, texts recounting more optimistic sentiments and intended to encourage the build-up and expression of joyful emotions are set to shorter, faster, simpler cycles.<sup>18</sup> Invariably, ritual sections involve a carefully graded musical progression from 'serious' cycles to 'joyous' cycles – leading the ritual attendees from inward-looking reflection to outward-looking celebration.

For the narrative chapter (*chang*) about the three young brothers, a commonly-used cycle of moderate-to-simple complexity called '*tongsalp'uri*' (lit. 'Eastern releasing [music]') is used, performed at a medium-fast tempo. The rhythmic patterning and pace instantly communicate to every ritual attendee that, although the text may detail hardship, the general outlook is positive and should not elicit grief. A certain distance is established between protagonists and listeners, which is reinforced by the relatively scanty use of first-person enactment. The accompanists' initial patterns (as notated above in example Ex. 1) highlight several defining characteristics of *tongsalp'uri*: a division into two halves (each six fast pulse beats in duration) and an ambiguous triple/duple dual-nature.

Throughout the first part of the chapter (until 7:05), in most cycle renditions, the accompanists adhere closely to a basic pattern, referred to by the ritualists as a ‘foundation pattern’ (*kibon p’ætōn*). The rhythmic ingredients of this are notated below, with the non-essential elements enclosed in brackets and annotations indicating groupings:

Ex. 2 The ‘foundation pattern’ (*kibon p’aetōn*), with optional elements in brackets

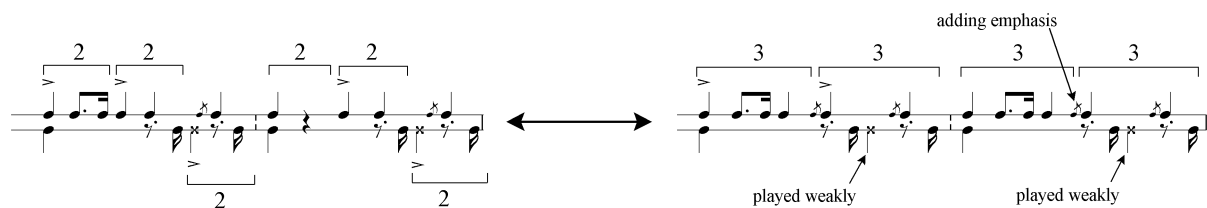


<sup>17</sup> Yi Hyegu provides a concise survey of rhythmic cycles (*changdan*) employed in Korean traditional music, demonstrating the huge variety that exists (1995, pp. 51–69). Kim Tongwŏn looks in more depth at the structural principles by which they are constructed and how they are rendered in performance (1998, pp. 97–149).

<sup>18</sup> Lee Bo-hyong identifies similar correspondence between narrative content and rhythmic cycle duration and tempo in respect to the Korean narrative song genre *p'ansori* (1978).

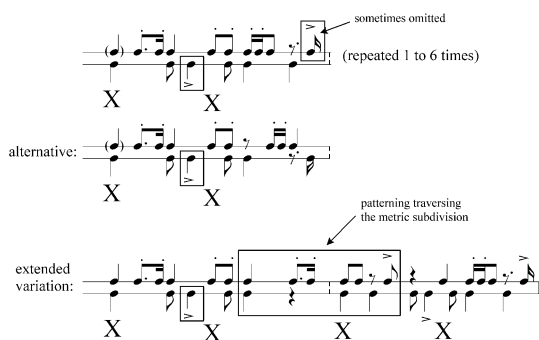
Here too, the triple/duple dual nature is apparent. While the gong strokes and sung refrain (“Ah Sejon-a”!) consistently demarcate 3+3 groupings, the drummer counters this triplicity to differing degrees with strokes that demarcate 2+2+2 divisions, imaginatively playing with listeners’ expectations. Sometimes, he counters the triplicity strongly, using marked accents on the third and/or fifth beats and making sure that neither hand sustains 3+3 patterning (as at the opening); and, at other times, he counters it only weakly, using barely perceptible accents on the third and/or fifth beats and sustaining 3+3 patterning in his right hand. In this way, he varies the level of musical tension that exists between him and other elements in the texture. (The reader is invited to experience this for himself/herself, by tapping out variations using the above notation and experimenting with different combinations of accents and strokes). The extremes of the duple–triple continuum are as follows:

Ex. 3 The duple/triple continuum, in performance of the ‘foundation pattern’ (see Ex. 2)



At relatively unpredictable points, scattered throughout the first part of the performance (up until 7:05), the drummer switches from playing the foundation pattern to executing what could be termed ‘breaks’. These episodes, which can begin at the start of either half of the cycle, invariably involve the stringing together of closely-related variations, lasting for anything up to six cycle-halves in duration (see Ex. 3 below). The placing of strong accents on weak metric beats (boxed below) evinces a sharpening of attentive focus on the drum part, setting up further musical tension, not just against the cycle’s usual points of accent (which continue within the listeners’ minds), but also against the *mudang*’s narrative song.<sup>19</sup> On three occasions, the drummer executes a ‘break’ variant in which the patterning is truly contrametric, traversing the mid-point metric subdivision and briefly bewildering the listener.

Ex. 4 The ‘break’ pattern, showing unusual points of accent and contrametric patterning (in boxes)



<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that, in this context, although the marked shift in attentive focus from singer to drummer and the introduction of more ‘challenging’ patterning are typical qualities of drum breaks, the continuance of the various other musical elements (song and gong), much as before, contravenes the usual understanding.

Finally, there is a third type of drum pattern, which is executed more and more frequently as the performance continues – again, in either half of the cycle and at relatively unpredictable points.

#### Ex. 5 Unambiguous 3+3 patterning



In the first section of the narrative, up to the point where the brothers return home in a dejected state, this pattern is only played three times, at quite well-spaced intervals. However, each appearance has a strong impact on the listener; for about one and half seconds, the duple/triple ambiguity is temporarily abandoned. The effects of this pattern will be discussed in more depth later, when it becomes more prominent.

Although Kim Yongt'aek, the drummer, often executes patterns that seem to provocatively compete against the *mudang*'s song, being a skilled accompanist, in many cycles he adopts a more complimentary, supportive role. He does this through a number of means:

- Mirroring the dramatic character of the narrative song – playing loud, challenging patterning when the *mudang* sings loudly about critical events (for example, the attempts on the boys' lives) and, conversely, repeating simple versions of the foundation pattern at a softer volume when she is providing quieter commentary (for example, the ensuing discussion: "Why did you try to kill us?").
- Marking the ends of narrative sections with punctuating patterns and thereby helping to make the narrative more comprehensible for the listeners. This occurs most conspicuously each time the *mudang* sings the tag phrase "That's the three young brothers", making use of a 'break' variant:

#### Ex. 6 Patterning to punctuate



- Playing in rhythmic unison with the song, matching accented syllables with accented strokes. For example, this occurs in the opening line "What geniuses they are!" (see above) and also the following line ("The brothers return home"), which features rather anomalous patterning:

### Ex. 7 Unison patterning



- Playing material that relates to the song's narrative content: word-painting. For example, the following unusually playful and rather anomalous pattern is played in conjunction with the text: *"But look now: there are the three brothers, sitting there playing!"*:

### Ex. 8 Playful patterning



Of course, Kim's approach is largely to be expected, given that the listeners' attentions are inevitably focused on the unfolding narrative. This narrative is delivered using Korean language that is far-removed from the standard spoken in Seoul, being rich in old-fashioned slang and East coast regional dialect, and it is delivered using the distinctive song style cultivated exclusively by the East coast hereditary shaman social institution: loud, straining near the top end of the vocal range, with a harsh, nasal sonority, extensive elision, highly unstable pitches, and elaborate ornamentation. Alongside these linguistic and stylistic qualities, which embody the aesthetics and traditions of the East coast local community, the story itself also serves to re-root the villagers in their collective pasts. Most of the villagers are past middle-age and have heard the story many times before at previous ritual performances – it is shared knowledge – and, in traditional enclaves like this, the pre-industrial world depicted would surely not seem so alien. It is certainly possible for them to relate to the characters; they too will have attended a small rural school, had to learn those Chinese characters, and witnessed bullying.

Although the language is often hard to comprehend for outsiders, the organisation of material is systematic and formulaic, ensuring immediate comprehensibility for insiders. The story proceeds chronologically through time, almost exclusively in the present tense and with a single locus of action (with no "meanwhile"s), and it is largely composed of repetitive sequences of events and lists (see Walraven 1994, pp. 123–141). To further enhance comprehensibility, the *mudang* often emphasises critical lines of text by adopting an emotive singing voice ("*...pushing them into the water*") and, when delivering less emotionally charged dialogue or additional commentary, switches from song mode to heightened speech (rhythmicised to conform to the meter) or natural-rhythm speech – both used, for example, in the "*why did you try to kill us?*" discussion.

The use of a common-knowledge story, an 'olde worlde' setting, earthy local language, systematic narrative formulae, and emotive realisation link the *mudang*'s performance of the Samshin origin myth to many other folk-tale narrative traditions elsewhere, including, for example, pantomime in the UK (Tillis 1999, pp. 141–177). An obvious point of difference, however, between this narrative

and stories like Cinderella and Jack and the Beanstalk is the frequent references to religion. In the short extract above, the Buddha intervenes to save the boys and boating (*paennori*) and flower viewing (*kkot nori*) are mentioned – these being potent symbols within the psychodrama of *mudang* ritual (*kut*), even having lengthy ritual sections devoted to them. And, in this case, being an origin-myth, the story will not culminate in ‘happily-ever-after’ bliss but, rather, deification; the three boys will become the triple-deity Samshin. The story continues (2:25–6:55):

*“Mother, help us find our father! [Repeated]*

*Everything comes in pairs – and from pairs:*

*Straw sandals and trees...*

*Everything has a father. Where do we come from?”*

*“Children, I will tell you:*

*I went to the bamboo field to have a pee,*

*And afterwards you were born.*

*A bamboo tree is your father. Go and find him”*

*The brothers go to the bamboo field, but which tree is their father?*

*They choose a short one, asking:*

*“Are you our father?”*

*“No, how could I be?*

*But when your real father dies after a long life,*

*Cut me down and use me to make a funeral banner.”*

*“Mother, help us find our father!” [Repeated]*

*“A chestnut tree is your father.*

*I went to the chestnut mountain to have a pee,*

*And afterwards you were born. Go and find him!”*

*The brothers go to the chestnut mountain, but which tree is their father?*

*They choose a short one, asking:*

*“Are you our father?”*

*“No, how could I be?*

*But when your real father dies after a long life,*

*Cut me down and use me to make an ancestral tablet.”*

*“Mother, help us find our father!” [Repeated]*

*Oh, the difficulties of telling them: their father was a monk!*

*How to hide this fact?*

*“If you won’t help us to find father, we’ll leave you”*

*The first son picks up a knife,*

*The second son picks up a lantern,*

*The third son takes up their bundle of clothes.*

*“We brothers are leaving you now!”*

*“Children, what are you talking about?!*

*I’ll help you find your father.*

*Let’s plant these gourd seeds:*

*A monk once gave them to me, telling me to use them when in trouble”*

By this point in the narrative, further characteristics common to folk narrative have emerged: bawdy humour (becoming pregnant through peeing), subversion (the Buddha as lecherous monk, also detailed in the previous chapters), ‘snappy’ popular sayings (“*Everything comes in pairs*”), and – most obviously – the epic quest.<sup>20</sup> Addressed in a typically repetitive, formulaic fashion, the boys’ search for their father is now under way.

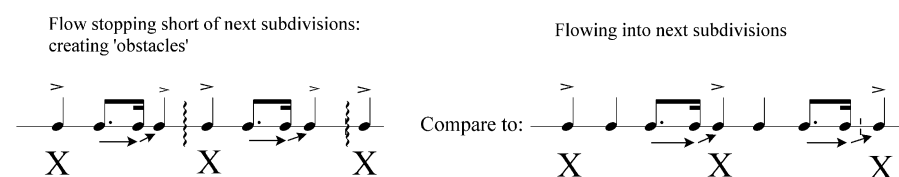
Throughout this passage of narrative, the drummer continues to construct his accompaniment out of the three ingredient patterns mentioned earlier: the ‘foundation pattern’, the ‘break’, and the 3+3 pattern. However, the latter appears increasingly frequently. Significantly, the drummer chooses to play it twice in a row in conjunction with the repeated line, “*Mother, help us find our father!*” – marking the very beginning of their search – and, thereafter, he uses it as a repeated pattern while the boys travel to the bamboo grove and chestnut mountain, in a variety of ways. In the following example, he introduces some unexpected accenting:

Ex. 9 The 3+3 pattern (‘searching rhythm’) being repeated with varied, unpredictable accenting



The absence of triple/duple metric ambiguity and the accenting of strong metric beats by all musical lines lend these episodes a more pronounced forward momentum and sense of unity of purpose that reflects and highlights the boys’ initial travels and their unified resolve. In fact, one could justifiably label this pattern as the ‘searching rhythm’. However, at the same time, these 3+3-based passages also give the impression of being constrained. The drummer, in particular, seems to be ‘chomping at the bit’. On the syntactic level, the progressively shortening durations lead to the third beat of each group, rather than into the next cycle, thereby obstructing the flow:

Ex. 10 Obstructions within the 3+3 ‘searching rhythm’



The effect of being constrained is compounded by the drummer’s skilful micro-rhythmic placing of the strokes on the sub-syntactic level, which is remarkably consistent.<sup>21</sup> In every three-beat grouping, he makes each successive beat on the crotchet level significantly shorter than the previous one,

<sup>20</sup> These qualities, and many others, are discussed within Stith Thompson’s vast cross-cultural study of folktales (1977, especially pp. 21–188). Thompson includes the epic quest amongst the various tale types (1977, pp. 481–488; see also Garry and el-Shamy 2004, for further examples).

<sup>21</sup> The significant impact of micro-rhythmic placement on listener’s perceptions has been demonstrated by an extensive body of research, Charles Keil’s work on ‘participatory discrepancies’ (PDs) being amongst the well-known (see, for example, Keil 1994).

thereby establishing an anacrusic ‘tumbling forward’ motion that leads one’s attentive focus towards the subsequent fourth (or first) beat; this focal beat is strongly accented and appears significantly in advance of what is expected (or ‘projected’, to use Hasty’s terminology) (Hasty 1997, pp. 84–96). In this way, the drummer gives the impression of trying to overcome the obstruction inherent within the syntactic organisation of the pattern (represented in Ex. 10). However, on each reiteration, the forceful pushing of the beat is not followed through with an acceleration of tempo; instead, the drummer waits a fraction longer, and the process begins again. The following annotated wave-file clearly reveals the shortening of beat duration (with time-intervals between beats marked in milliseconds) and indicates roughly where listeners might *expect* the first beats to fall (marked with thicker black lines in the ruler). This wave file also reveals the level of swing that Kim Yongt’aek applies to shorter denominations; what is indicated in the notation as a quaver (in the left hand) tends to be quite close to a triplet quaver in duration.

Ex. 11 The drummer’s articulation of the 3+3 ‘searching rhythm’



It should be noted that the impression of being constrained by the continuing beat, as demarcated by the large gong, is actually a contrived effect; as the undisputed leader of the ensemble, the drummer has absolute power over the tempo and, when he really wishes to evince any changes, he does. Under his guidance, the tempo undergoes a fairly consistent, steady acceleration from the outset and, by the time the boys are threatening to leave their mother, the cycle has shortened from 3.5 seconds in duration to 2.9. The music is now flowing at a very fast pace.

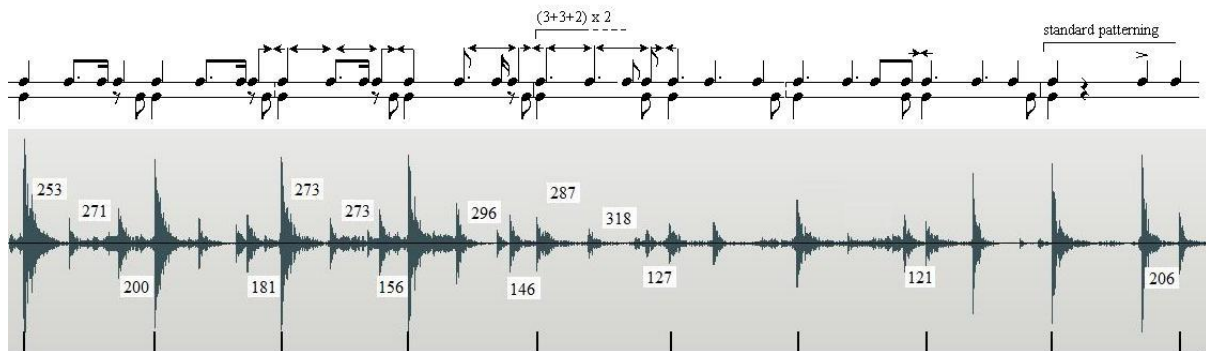
Towards the end of this narrative section, profoundly disappointed by their mother’s unwillingness to help in their search, the boys prepare to leave both her and the security of home, picking up knife, lantern, and possessions. To accompany the *mudang*’s description of these preparations, the drummer repeats the ‘searching rhythm’ yet again, but, as he does so, he subjects it to a novel transformative process, morphing it from its original 3+3 form into a rather different pattern, with a 3+3+2 configuration. As can be seen in Ex. 12, this is achieved through a progressive shortening of the third beats in each grouping (shown in the timings marked below the wave image) and a corresponding lengthening of the other beats (marked above the wave image).<sup>22</sup> To aid legibility and comprehensibility, the first beat of each group is indicated on a ruler beneath the wave image, less

<sup>22</sup> This transformative technique is applied to certain other rhythmic cycles in the East Coast shaman musical repertoire and also features in the SamulNori piece “*Uttari p’ungmul*”, which is based on *p’ungmul* rhythms from the Seoul region.



significant changes in beat-duration are not shown, and timing contractions and expansions are marked with arrows above the staff notation; the transition to the 3+3+2 patterning is seamless (contrary to what is implied by the notation).

Ex. 12 Rhythmic transformation into 3+3+2 patterning (the ‘quest rhythm’), performed with the text: *The third son takes up their bundle of clothes, “We brothers are leaving you now!”*



By applying this transformative technique, Kim ‘overcomes’ the obstruction inherent within the ‘searching rhythm’, successfully establishing new patterning that flows more freely. This could be interpreted as a musical representation of the boys’ ‘breaking free’ and also encouragement for the ritual attendees to do likewise; as was mentioned earlier, *p’uri* (‘loosening’ or catharsis) is a principle objective of these rituals (see also Mills 2007, p. 41). Later, when the boys and their mother venture further afield in their united search, the flowing pattern becomes the sole accompanying rhythm; it takes on the identity of ‘quest rhythm’. However, at this point in the story, the boys do not follow through with their threat of leaving and the drummer accordingly reverts to the settled ‘foundation pattern’. The next line sung by the *mudang* is: “*Children, what are you talking about?!*”

This shortlived transformation in the narrative and its accompanying music provokes a big response amongst the ritual attendees. Just after Kim Yongt’aek has reverted to the foundation pattern, one woman shouts out “ye – hay!” and gets up onto her feet to dance. The effect is contagious: others start clapping along and there is a murmur of activity. People appear to be excited by the prospect of a threefold release from confinement – the boys leaving their homeplace and finding solutions to their problems, the music acquiring unimpeded flow (syntactically and sub-syntactically), and they themselves escaping their everyday concerns to join together in the moment. As discussed earlier, the desired experience of communal joy (*hŭng*) is only achieved through active involvement, and it is at this point in the narrative that the attendees start to pool their energies, proactively encouraging its further growth. No doubt, they are hoping that the release from confinement will be prolonged on the next occasion.

The story continues (6:55–11:15, end of extract):

*The gourd plants spread out in the night:  
So many gourds, stems and leaves throughout the whole house.  
If you’re wondering how much they spread:  
They spread to all the temples in all regions of Korea!*

*"Let's go and look for your father!" [Repeated]*  
*How happy the boys are!*

*"But how shall we carry mother?*  
*Let's make a palanquin from the gourd plants"*  
*They gather stems and leaves and put it together.*  
*The eldest picks it up at the front,*  
*The middle holds the back,*  
*And the youngest carries all their belongings.*

*"Where shall we go looking?"*  
[They follow the gourd stems to many temples all around the country,  
in a very long section of highly repetitive text:  
*They go to Haeinsa Temple in Hyöpch'ön,*  
*They go to Pulguksa Temple in Kyöngju...*]

*"Children, children,*  
*Let's rest a while!"*  
*As they are resting a woman passes by and remarks:*  
*"You look just like a monk at our temple, nearby:*  
*You walk like him,*  
*You talk like him..."*  
[Here, again, there is a long section of repetitive, formulaic text]

[Spoken:] *The woman returns to the temple and enters the sanctum where a monk is seated in prayer. She tells him of the uncanny resemblance between him and the boys sitting with their mother just outside. The monk actually already knew that the boys would come at this time. He gets up to go and meet them...*

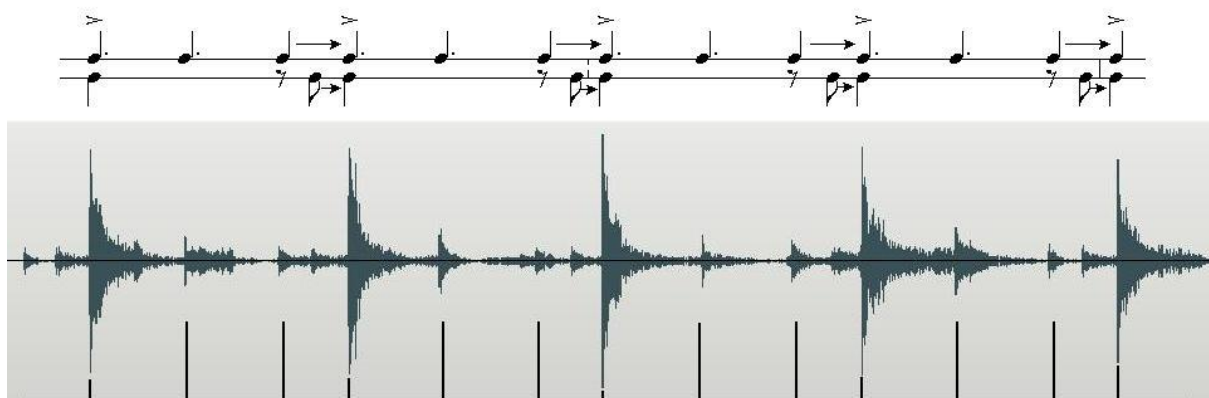
As in many other folk narratives, it is a distinctly magical transformation that facilitates a change in the protagonists' fortunes: miraculous plant growth, somewhat reminiscent of that in Jack and the Beanstalk (Thompson 1977, p. 490–491). The growth extends "*...to all the temples in all regions of Korea!*", opening up a vast area to the boys' search, and it is while the *mudang* is singing this line that the drummer abandons the 'foundation pattern' for good, switching to the aforementioned 'quest rhythm'. From this point on, he exclusively plays variants of this rhythm, right up until the end of the chapter, when his playing gets quieter and quieter and then stops altogether during the final spoken passage.

The one consistent element in the 'quest rhythm' is a long-long-short configuration of events. Although these durations usually approximate to 3+3+2 proportions, the tempo is much too fast for them to be 'measured' by the ear or conceptually divided into smaller metric units. Rather, the strokes are perceived as slightly unevenly placed beats within an ongoing 3-beat meter – especially because the *mudang*'s singing maintains the same 3+3-beat patterning as before. Nevertheless, the dynamic characteristics of the patterning are akin to those of the numerous other 3+3+2 rhythms

around the world, including the *tresillo* of Cuban popular music, *cocek* of Macedonian Romany music, and various bell patterns of West Africa (for example, that used to accompany *Sohu* dance amongst the Ewe of Ghana) (Toussaint 2005, pp. 4–5; Leake 2009, p. 12–14; see also Locke 1998, p. 15). As Jerry Leake explains: “the pattern generates a strong sensation of perpetual motion that keeps the music driving forward. The dynamism and energy of 4 leading to 1 – **4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1** – is a critical component... function[ing] as a propellant to the music” (2009, p. 12).

Although Kim Yongt’aek ceaselessly demarcates the 3+3+2 rhythm, rather than play the exact same pattern ad infinitum, he playfully switches between a small number of closely-related variations, repeating each a fairly unpredictable number of times. This serves to create fluctuating levels of forward momentum, providing a suitable foil for the *mudang*’s singing and its narrative content and keeping the attendees ‘on their toes’ (highly stimulated and alert). The most commonly executed variation features a double anacrusis, which helps to propel the music forwards (see BELOW). The accompanying wave image indicates fairly typical micro-rhythmic stroke placement for this pattern. In contrast with the ‘searching rhythm’ (see Ex. 11), the ‘quest rhythm’ already possesses pronounced forward-drive (inherently, on the syntactic level) and the drummer generally does not force the momentum further by ‘pushing the beat’ (on the micro-rhythmic level); one can see how closely his stroke-placements conform to the mathematically determined 3:3:2 proportions, which are marked on the ruler.<sup>23</sup>

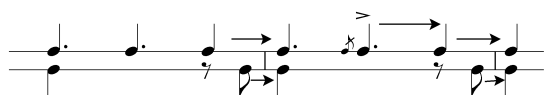
Ex. 13 The drummer’s articulation of the ‘quest rhythm’, with its double anacrusis



Sometimes Kim places more emphasis on the fifth stroke of the pattern through accenting and/or ornamentation (below left). As Butterfield explains, the stressing of a metrically weak beat constitutes a “perceptual challenge”, making the listener wonder what will happen next and thereby further enhancing the forward momentum (Butterfield 2006).

<sup>23</sup> The 3:3:2 measurements were established by determining the duration of each 3-beat unit and dividing it up accordingly. This takes into account the fact that there are constant, very small fluctuations in tempo from one moment to the next – as in all humanly articulated music.

Ex. 14 A version of the 'quest rhythm' with enhanced momentum



Another way in which Kim directs the listeners' attentions towards new events is by setting up question-and-answer pairings, again through strategic accenting. Conversely, there are times when the drummer wishes to retreat into the background and reduce the forward momentum – for example, when the *mudang* is providing commentary. At such points, playing at a softer dynamic, the left-hand pattern often becomes so quiet as to be inaudible and all strokes are executed at equal volume. But even in such episodes, the inherent dynamism of the rhythmic cell ensures that the head-long flow is not lost.

Drawing on Hodeir's well-known metaphor, originally proposed in reference to swing in jazz, one could say that the repeated 3+3+2 rhythm has pronounced locomotive-like qualities, drawing the music "inexorably ahead" on account of its inherent properties (Hodeir, 1956, p. 198 cit. Butterfield 2006). Accordingly, the drummer's role can be likened to that of a controller, determining the nature of the locomotive's pulling action through details of articulation. Periodically throughout this section, Kim promotes the impression of the music's being carried forwards by an invisible force by 'whipping' the higher-pitched drum head – pulling the stick back behind his ear and then bringing it sharply down on the skin to create a cracking sound. In this context, although Kim continues to articulate propulsive patterns on the lower-pitched drum head, it is unambiguously the drum itself (not the rhythms per se) that becomes the vehicle of transportation; specifically, the drum becomes a horse and Kim, its forceful rider:

Ex. 15 A 'Whip-shot' variant of the 'quest rhythm'



Intriguingly, metaphorical conceptions of musician-and-drum as horse (or reindeer)-and-rider are well-documented in scholarship about Siberian and Mongolian shamanism, in which the shaman beats the animal and it transports him/her to other realms (see, for example, Czaplicka 1914, pp. 224–226; Jacobson-Tepfer 2004, pp. 547–550). However, there are some obvious differences between the more northern and Korean examples: Korean shamans do not travel to other realms but rather invite deities into this world (Kim T'aegon 1998, p. 28; Howard 1998, p. 6); horses are relatively insignificant in Korea, both symbolically and culturally (making the 'whipping' effect rather exceptional); and there is no evidence that this understanding of the drum derives from the more northerly shamanic traditions. Nevertheless, what these traditions do have in common is a pronounced emphasis on employing rhythm as a tool for cognitive transformation – a feature that can, of course, also be identified in numerous other performance contexts around the world.

At this point in the performance, the extensive repetition of a short dynamic rhythm – the 3+3+2 pattern – constitutes a rather typical example of so-called 'auditory driving', one important function

of which is to disable certain cognitive functions and thereby encourage the onset of a different state-of-mind, commonly referred to as 'trance' (see Weir 2006, p. 21). When the listeners focus their attentions intensely on these repetitive stimuli, they are effected by processes of entrainment, which essentially lock them into phase with the patterns and promote a state of consciousness in which they are dissociated from themselves and yet hyper-alert (see, for example, Clayton et al. 2004). These processes are compounded by additional auditory driving, provided by the similarly repetitive song text ("*They go to Haeinsa Temple in Hyöpch'ön, They go to Pulguksa Temple in Kyöngju...*"), and also by visual/kinaesthetic driving, resulting from repetitive movements; as she sings, the *mudang* performs simple repetitive dance moves (akin to walking-on-the-spot) and, as the performance continues, more and more attendees get up to dance themselves. Evidently, in this context, the trance state, promoted by musical performance, is a powerful aid to the blossoming of communal joy (*hŭng*).

It is when the boys are creating the palanquin for their mother out of the gourd plants that Kim Yongt'aek first switches to his most propulsive 'quest rhythm' variation (SEE ABOVE) – and it is this moment that provokes the most explosive response amongst the attendees, involving cries of elation, shouts of "Excellent drumming!", "Doing great!", and other such phrases, clapping, and dancing. These expressions of involvement, encouragement, and pleasure persist as the *mudang* systematically lists all the temples and places that the entourage travels to. Towards the end of the list, a male villager wanders up to her, stuffs a 10,000 wŏn note (equivalent to £5) in her waist band (where people traditionally place money as payment and indication of approval), and takes centre-stage for a while, dancing energetically beside her. His dance provokes another explosive response, as does the *mudang's* remark when he finally steps to the side: "Man, you paid your 10,000 wŏn and danced!" (Meaning: "You didn't come here and give me 10,000 wŏn because you liked my performance but because you wanted an excuse to dance"). For as long as the drummer plays the dynamic 3+3+2 rhythm, the atmosphere remains charged with joyful emotion and activity: people dancing, laughing, joking, clapping, calling out. This state of communal joy constitutes the emotional peak of performance – towards which everybody has been committing their energies from the beginning. However, inevitably, the dynamic must change and it is the narrative that determines the point at which this happens; the boys finally reach the end of their journey, the drummer gently brings the driving rhythm to a close (diminishing into a tense silence), and the monk prepares to meet his sons.

## Conclusion

Focusing on a single performance of the Samshin origin myth within the context of Korean shaman ritual, the preceding analysis has revealed a strongly complementary relationship between narrative and rhythm, showing how these elements work in tandem to communicate a general narrative development from a condition of oppression (*han*) to a state of liberation. To summarise, the protagonists' experiences appear to be embodied in the rhythms as follows:

Growing up in their home community, the boys are bewildered by a confusion of contrasting treatments – a condition that is, perhaps, reflected in the triple/duple ambiguity of the principle accompanying rhythm (the 'foundation pattern'). They experience oppression and conflict and,

accordingly, we also hear a prevalence of rhythms that forcefully 'go against the grain' (in the 'break patterns'). The boys' condition of captive stasis within the community is accompanied by a general lack of forward momentum, with just a few hints of future adventures, indicated by rare articulations of a shorter, more flowing pattern (the 'searching pattern'). When the boys finally become resolved to find their father and start to travel further afield, the 'searching pattern' is used more often and more repetitively; their united determination and greater mobility can be heard in the pattern's unambiguous triplicity, marked by all musical components. However, they still face multiple obstacles, which they try unsuccessfully to overcome; accordingly, we hear the drummer straining against an obstacle that is syntactically in-built within the 'searching pattern', pushing the beat but failing to evince any acceleration. At the first hint that the boys will actually leave their old environment behind and begin their quest, the drummer 'solves' the problem through a cunning transformative technique and momentarily establishes flowing 3+3+2 patterning. But, on this instance, the boys are encouraged to stay and the original, settled 'foundation pattern' returns. Soon after, when the magical growth of the gourd seeds occurs, opening up the whole of Korea to the boys' search, the flowing 3+3+2 patterning returns, taking on the identity of 'quest pattern'. As the strange entourage travels to and fro at great speed, their momentum can be heard in this rhythm. The drummer never lets the momentum slow, 'whipping' his instrument to keep it going, carrying the travellers towards their goal.

In this way, rhythmic patterning serves to buttress the text, communicating details about the protagonists' physical movements and psychological states with a directness that is typical of music and which words alone cannot achieve. Of course, other facets of the performance, which have not been addressed within the limited scope of this article, also contribute to the projection of meaning – most obviously, melodic patterning, vocalization, dance and other body gestures. However, what is readily apparent is that the transmission of narrative meaning is not the ultimate objective here; in common with other performances, the fundamental purpose of this ritual performance is actually to evince transformations within the minds of the attendees. Specifically, in this particular context, performance is intended to solve psychological problems (or at least propose possible solutions) and, accordingly, to promote positive emotions. The narrative and the music can be regarded as means towards these ends.

To achieve the ritual objectives, two closely associated processes appear to be of paramount significance. Firstly, carefully controlled repetition is employed to promote a light trance. As the attendees listen to the performance of the Samshin origin myth, they become increasingly immersed in it. Their attentions turn outwards, away from their own diverse concerns, to focus on the trials and tribulations that are being communicated through the music and narrative. And as the patterning becomes increasingly repetitive, through processes of entrainment, their immersion becomes more profound; whole domains of anxious thought are inhibited until there is only the present moment, with the unfolding narrative, ritualists and attendees. When the protagonists find solutions in the narrative, the attendees celebrate in sympathy as though the triumphs were their own. Working in conjunction with this, the second critical enabling process is that of 'coming together' as a community – a process that is naturally at the heart of all ritual. As the performance unfolds, the attendees become increasingly aware of shared knowledge, shared history, shared sensibilities, shared values, and shared emotions and, although the performers are unquestionably leading the proceedings, the attendees take an active role in promoting their cohesion by expressing

themselves. Fueled by trance (and alcohol), everybody engages deeply with the optimistic narrative and with one another, pooling their energies and experiencing profound communal joy (*hŭng*).

It is clear that group-binding interactivity and trance-inducing repetition are conspicuous features elsewhere in Korean folk music – in traditional contexts, such as the performances of percussion bands (*p'ungmul*) and folksong (*minyo*), and in more 'modern' contexts, such as night clubs and karaoke rooms. Of course, they are features which can also be observed in innumerable other musical genres around the world, in many cases leading to much the same emotional response. It seems likely, therefore, that the methodology employed in this article – diachronic relational analysis of song text, rhythm, performative behaviour and emotions (as expressed by musicians and audience) – would be widely applicable as a way of illuminating how 'everything comes together' in performance.

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